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Summit **T**IMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai appointed Acting Chief Justice

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 SEPT:

The Central Government has notified the appointment of Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai as the Acting Chief Justice of the Sikkim High Court.

Justice Rai has been appointed the Acting Chief Justice in view of the impending retirement of incumbent Chief Justice Vijai Kumar Bist.

The notification issued to this effect yesterday states, "In exercise of the powers conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Smt. Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, senior-most Judge of the Sikkim High



Court, to perform the duties of the office of the Chief Justice of the Sikkim High Court with effect from 17th September, 2019 consequent upon the retirement of Shri Justice Vijai Kumar

Bist, Chief Justice of the Sikkim High Court."

Justice Rai has already served as the Acting Chief Justice of the High Court once between July and October 2018.

The first woman judge of the Sikkim High Court, Justice Rai pursued Political Science (Hons) in Lady Shriram College, Delhi University, and proceeded to join the Campus Law Centre, Delhi University, from where she did her three year LL.B. course till 1989. She enrolled in the Bar Association of Delhi in 1990, and worked in the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court of India under an Advocate on Record.

Justice Rai was appointed Judicial Magistrate 1st Class in December 1990, the first woman to hold the post in the state. She went on to become a District &

Sessions Judge in 2004, and was later appointed as Registrar of the High Court that same year. After a few more stints as District & Sessions Judge, Justice Rai was appointed as a judge of the High Court in April 2015, becoming the first lady from Sikkim to be elevated to the post.

A Collegium recommendation was made last month to appoint Acting Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, Justice Arup Kumar Goswami as the next Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim. However, the Central Government is yet to act on the said notification, it is informed.

Two injured in a road mishap at Dikchu



WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 14 SEPT:

A driver and a handy boy were injured in a road mishap here at Dikchu Bazar, East Sikkim, this morning at around 8:30AM when the cement-laden truck [WB-

76A-5490, an Ecomet], plying from Siliguri towards Phodong in North Sikkim plunged off the road just short of Dikchu Bazaar.

Only the driver, Sanjay Khawas, 27, a resident of Rangpo Bazar,

West Bengal, and the handy-boy, Deepak Darjee, 17, a resident of Lower Tumin, East Sikkim, were on board.

The two were referred to STNM Hospital after first-aid at Dikchu PHC.

Arjun Piyush feted with awards and felicitation in Nepal



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 SEPT:

Senior journalist and litterateur from Sikkim, Arjun Piyush, has been honoured with the Bodhnath Himkumari Lamichaney Smriti Purashkar and Pallav Rashtriya Samman on the 24th anniversary of Palav Sahitya Prasthan in Chitwan in Nepal.

He was felicitated for his contributions to journalism and literature

over the three decades that he has been writing.

The awards carry a cash prize, shawl and a certificate of appreciation.

Mr Piyush was among other litterateurs from Nepal who were honoured during the function which was chaired by Tribuwan University's Head of Nepali department, Prof Dr Laxman Prasad Gautam, as chief guest.

CM meets Jagat Guru Anant, thanks Pranami Sampradaya for presence in Sikkim

GANGTOK, 14 SEPT [IPR]: Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] met Jagat Guru Anant, Krishnamani Maharaj, at his residence at Lumsey and sought his blessings today.

Acharya Krishnamani Maharaj is the present religious head of Shri Krishna Pranami Sampradaya and hails from Nautanpuri Dham, Jamnagar, Gujarat. At present, this Sampradaya has over 10 million followers and more than 800 temples and Centers spread all over the world with many followers of Pranami organisation in the state as well.

Jagat Guru Anant Krishnamani Maharaj is on a two-day Sikkim visit and will also halt at Shri Krishna Pranami Dham at Bermiok in South Sikkim. He congratulated the CM on taking charge of the new government and expressed his happiness and gratitude over the State Government's decision to construct a Brindavan Dham at Daramdin.

Jagat Guru and the Chief Minister also discussed the prospect of religious tourism in Sikkim and how it

can be expanded further by embracing all religions of the state.

Jagat Guru said that the land itself is blessed by divine presence of gods and goddesses since ancient times and thus the State will always be blessed and secular.

The Chief Minister reiterated the stand of the State Government and said that the government was committed to ensure religious freedom to every citizen and stressed that all religious activities will be kept away from political pressure strengthening the bond of brotherhood amongst all religions.

He also assured all possible support to the Pranami sects of Sikkim and he praised the organisation for enlightening many people through the preaching of Pranami Dharma which teaches one to keep away from alcoholism and toxic food habits and spreads the need for spiritualism.

Jagat Guru was accompanied by Krishna Pranami Sewa Samiti's Nepal President, Shyam KC, dharma guru Rohit Raj Maharaj, Shyam Acharya and others.

3-language formula should not be tinkered with: Cong on Shah's Hindi pitch

NEW DELHI, SEP 14 (PTI): Hours after Union minister Amit Shah's Hindi language pitch, the Congress on Saturday said the three-language formula should not be tinkered with and controversies must not be stirred up on "emotive" issues settled by Constitution-makers.

The opposition party also said no indication should be given of a re-think on the "three-language formula" as it will create strife and unrest in the country.

The three languages formula is commonly understood to comprise Hindi, English and the regional language of the respective states.

Home Minister Shah on Saturday pitched for a common language for the country and said as Hindi is spoken the most, it can unite the whole country.

He also asked everyone to use their native

languages as much as possible, but said efforts will be made to expand Hindi's reach to different parts of the country.

Asked about Shah's remarks, Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said: "Let me make it very clear, if that is true then the Home Minister of India should know that Hindi has been declared as the official language long back."

The Constitution clearly respects India's diversity as it recognises 22 languages spoken by a large number of people, Sharma said.

"We should not stir up controversies on emotive and sensitive issues which have been settled by the maturity of India's Constitution-makers and the prime minister after Independence, especially I am referring to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. When the

turn to pg02

The Ballad of Bhaichung Bhutia released in New Delhi

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 14 SEPT:

The Ballad of Bhaichung Bhutia, a book on football icon and former Indian football team skipper, Bhaichung Bhutia, was officially released by the Minister of State, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at New Delhi on Friday in the presence of Bhaichung Bhutia. The book is written by Bhaichung's biology teacher and dormitory in-charge in Tashi Namgyal Academy, Leonard Lefevre and beautifully illustrated by Chewang Rinchen Lepcha.

Leonard Lefevre, who is popularly known as 'Sir Lenny', had served Tashi Namgyal Academy for 19 years as a Biology teacher from 1987 to 2006. When Bhaichung joined TNA as a scholar of Sports Authority of India in football in 1987, Sir Lenny was his biology teacher and dormitory in-charge.

The book attempts to cover all important instances and memories of Bhaichung's football journey from his school days to his farewell match against Bayern Munich in 2012 in poetry form supported by incredible illustration. The book also has letters sent by Bhaichung to Sir Lenny while play-



ing outside the State and rare photographs of Bhaichung with Sir Lenny on different occasions.

Speaking to media persons today, Mr Lefevre said, "Bhaichung Bhutia is a real living legend and his immense contributions towards Indian football should never be forgotten. This thought

motivated me to come out with this book."

Sharing his memories with Bhaichung, he said, "I have been watching his progress from childhood and he grew very close to me over the years. He was good in all sports and was very competitive, dedicated and energetic. He never

wanted to lose in any competition."

Even after Bhaichung was picked up by Kolkata's giant, East Bengal FC and while playing for other major clubs of the country, the author was constantly in touch with Bhaichung through letters.

Mr Lefevre shared that the farewell match of Bhaichung Bhutia against Bayern Munich on 10 January in year 2012 made him nostalgic and exactly after a week of the farewell match he started to write this book.

"After meeting another student from TNA, Chewang Rinchen Lepcha, the whole idea of this book got conceptualised. After thorough research Chewang started working on the book," he said. It helped that Chewang was also a former student of TNA, he added.

"Bhaichung just loved the book and more interestingly his children have loved this book even more than their father," Mr Lefevre said. He mentioned that this was his first book and many other books are in the pipeline.

It is learnt that former students of TNA have come forward for the Sikkim launch of this book on 25 September at Gangtok. turn to pg02

Sitharaman 'clueless' in dealing with economic slowdown, steps to boost economy 'cosmetic': Cong

NEW DELHI, SEP 14 (PTI):

The Congress on Saturday alleged that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was "clueless" in dealing with the economic slowdown and termed the latest steps announced by her to boost the economy as "cosmetic" and "piecemeal".

The party's attack came after Sitharaman announced an over Rs 70,000-crore package for export and real estate sectors, including setting up of a stressed asset fund, as the government continued with firefighting measures to pull the economy out of a six-year low growth rate.

"I can only say that the finance minister is clueless as to how to deal with the gravity of the crisis," Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said at a press conference. After the earlier announcements of stimulus package, the situation deteriorated and the latest steps are not going to help, Sharma asserted.

"The finance minister of India is lacking in macroeconomic understanding. A comprehensive package for economic revival was expected," he said. "The steps announced today will not revive the Indian economy, they are purely cosmetic, piecemeal and also convey the arrogance of the government and its indifference to the seriousness of the situation," he said.

Sharma said what was required to revive the economy was infusion of capital and not merely "small interest subventions" which have been announced.

The government is unable to do so because it does not have money, the Congress leader claimed. Like last year, this year also the situation of revenue shortfall appears to be more serious, he said. Sharma also hit out at Sitharaman's earlier statement blaming millennials' preference for ride-hailing services such as Uber and Ola over owning cars, and not high taxes, for slumping vehicle sales.

He also took a swipe at Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's apparent gaffe in explaining that achieving the target of nearly doubling the size of the economy to USD 5 trillion should not be looked through the prism of Maths.

Goyal had remarked that maths did not help Albert Einstein 'to discover gravity'. The slip up was not lost on netizens who quickly took to Twitter to point out that gravity was discovered by Isaac Newton and Einstein is credited for his theory of relativity.

"Not only insulting the question on numbers and mathematics, but (he is) confusing the country or himself rather on Einstein and Newton," Sharma said of Goyal's remarks.

Awareness programme on Bio-Security in Broiler Farming and Livestock

GYALSHING, 14 SEPT (IPR): A day long awareness programme on "Bio-Security in Broiler Farming and Livestock" and Livestock & Poultry Management and Production, organised at Chingthang Gram Prashasan Kendra, Yangsum by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Government of Sikkim.

The program was attended by Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Lok Nath Sharma where he distributed goats of Jamunapari Cross Breed (Male), Piglets and Equipments of Poultry Management to the farmers of Chingthang Gram Panchayat Unit, today.

Special breed of goats (Male) were brought from Kolkata for the breeding and propagation purpose. The livestock were distributed during the Awareness Program attended by villagers and beneficiaries of the area.

Nine Jamunapari Cross Breed goats were handed over to nine beneficiaries along with a Feeding Bowl and Thirty Kilograms of crushed Mess to each beneficiary. The Minister also handed over Crossed breed of Six Piglets (three male and three female) to three beneficiaries.

Minister Mr Sharma, addressing the gathering, marked the day as a historic occasion for Chingthang GPU and anticipated transformation



of economic standard of the farmers through rearing of beneficial varieties of livestock distributed today.

He advised beneficiaries to be more progressive and productive so as to enhance their income and abilities of self-sustenance.

Minister also expressed his commitment to work for the development of the constituency and to make people be self-reliant for economic freedom. He urged villagers to be more serious in earning livelihood through proper rearing of cattle and adoption of agricultural practices.

Minister also informed that the Chief Minister of Sikkim has given directives to the concerned Secretaries to provide governmental facilities and required support in the interest of the farmers and advised to take up floriculture, dairy farming, vegetable cultivation, Fisheries in

support of the concerned departments.

He also informed that the Chingthang GPU will be tremendously benefited under various schemes throughout the journey of Model Village. He also said that the Government is formulating a plan to ascertain marketing of vegetables and other productions.

Minister also informed about the planning of the state government to create employment opportunities in the month of November and December 2019. He also encouraged Self Help Group to be technically efficient for stitching of student uniform.

Director AH&VS, Dr TP Lama (SR) outlined need of sound management practices and care of livestock facilities being provided by the department and urged beneficiaries to take care of the livestock for economic growth. She drew lights on characteristic

features of Jamunapari Cross Breed, reared for both Milk and Meat purpose that produces 2-3kg of Milk per day and Meat of more than one hundred kilograms. She urged beneficiaries to obtain optimum level of service benefits from the technical experts availed by the department in the locality.

Director, Kalpana Pradhan (Extension & Training) highlighted on the purpose to generate massive awareness in rearing of livestock and advised them to follow scientific methods and absolute proportion of feeding to provide proper care of livestock. She encouraged farmers to set an example in terms of cattle rearing, management and production to present entire GPU as a Model Village.

Additional Director (Piggery), Dr Sharman Rai congratulated people of Chingthang Gram Panchayat Unit and ex-

pressed gratitude to the concerned Minister for his brainchild to develop the GPU as a Model Village. He elaborated on importance of animal protein and scope of piggy farming at length.

During the technical session, Joint Director (Soreng), Dy Director (Mangalbarey), Veterinary Officers from Tashiding & Dentam elucidated on technical aspects of Dairy Management, Piggery Management, Poultry Management and Goat/ Sheep Management, respectively.

The programme was also attended by the Block Development Officer Hee Martam, Prativa Tamang.

Earlier, the Minister listened to the grievances of public and also had a brief meeting with the Directors and officials of AH&VS to formulate a special plan to develop Chingthang GPU as a Model Village.

SBI wants to be lead-bank for Ladakh; opens 14th branch



DISKIT (LADAKH), SEP 14 (PTI): The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has expressed desire to be become the lead-bank for the newly carved-out Union Territory of Ladakh.

SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar Saturday inaugurated a new branch in this remote town of Diskit in the Nubra Valley, making it the 14th facility of the bank in the Ladakh region and 22,024th branch for the bank.

Every state or region has a lead-bank, which takes the mantle of ensuring adequate banking services as the convener of the state-level banking committee.

At present, J&K Bank is the lead-bank for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

On August 5, the government had announced that the entire region will cease to be a single state but would become two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh, wherein

J&K will have a state Assembly under lieutenant governor, while Ladakh will have no legislature.

The announcement was part of the government decision to abrogate Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution which gave special status to J&K.

Speaking to reporters here Saturday, the chairman said if other banks have a problem to be the SLBC convener, SBI is willing to take up that mantle.

He said the branch in Diskit was planned over three months ago, much before the Centre decided to bifurcate the state into two UTs.

Kumar also affirmed SBI's commitment to help the people of both the UTs with credit needs once the demand comes.

The bank has 185 branches in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and personal lending segment is the most active, he said.

There is also traction

on the small business front, but lending to agriculture and industry is limited in J&K, he admitted, adding that the average loan in this area is also small, at up to Rs 5 lakh.

"Through such initiatives, we want the people of the region to know how deep do we take our banking services into the remotest parts of the country," Kumar said.

Diskit is located at an altitude of over 10,000 ft, and is around 90-km off the border with Pakistan at Turtuk.

Local member of Parliament Jamyang Tsering Namgyal welcomed the SBI move to open two more branches in remote villages, including Batalik, which had seen action during the Kargil conflict in 1999.

He expressed hope that these branches will channelise savings of the people and help them access credit, which will lead to the overall growth of the region.

SKM block-level meeting at Upper Segeng



SUMMIT REPORT

JORETHANG 14 SEPT:

A block-level meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was held at Upper Segeng, ward no.4 under Zoom Salghari constituency today.

The meeting was held in the presence of senior party worker, BM Lama, and was organised by the youth of Mabong Segeng, an SKM press release informs.

The meeting discussed future plans for the development of the village and creating op-

portunities for the residents. The meeting also resolved that there be no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or colour and that all be treated equal.

The meeting was also attended by the party's CLC president, Mohan Kr Rai, former chairperson Kiran Kr Rai, CLC vice president, Shyam Kr Rai, Khagendra Rai from Zoom, block president CK Rai, development chairperson, Sontosh Kr Tamang, concerned ward president and youth.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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3-language...

issue came up of language and the three-language formula was devised," Sharma said.

That formula must not be tinkered with and no indication should be given of a rethink which will create strife and unrest in the country, the Congress leader said.

Hindi is spoken by a majority of India's people, but equally important is the English language to be globally competent and to be global leaders.

"But whether it is Tamil, Kannada, Bengali, Odiya, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Urdu, they all are Indian languages. So, yes, we celebrate the Hindi Divas. I am also Hindi-speaking. But I respect all other languages in the country," Sharma said.

According to the Official Languages Act, 1963, Hindi and English are the official languages for the Union government and Parliament.

A total of 22 languages of the country are recognised under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

FM unveils...

The new RoDTEP "will more than adequately incentivise exporters than existing schemes put together," she said.

Besides, a Rs 1,700 crore annual dole will allow Export Credit Guarantee Corp (ECGC) to offer higher insurance cover to banks lending working capital for exports, she said. This will enable reduction in the overall cost of export credit including interest rate, especially for MSMEs, she added.

Priority sector lending tag for export credit is under consideration of the Reserve Bank, which will release an additional Rs 36,000 crore to Rs 68,000 crore as export credit. Other measures for exporters included real-time electronic processing of GST refunds by the month-end, action plan to reduce time to export or turnaround time at airports and ports by December and a special FTA utilisation mission that will work with export houses to utilise concessional tariffs in each free trade agreement (FTA) India has with different nations.

She also announced that a mega shopping festival, on the likes of the world-famous Dubai Shopping Festival, will be conducted at four places in India in March on themes of gems and jewellery, handicraft/yoga/tourism, textiles and leather.

The finance minister said the measures together with the ones announced on the previous two occasions will help lift the economy and growth rate will improve in the second quarter of this fiscal.

Inflation, she said, has been kept "very much" below the 4 per cent mark and there are "clear signs" of revival in the economy, as witnessed in an uptick in industrial production and fixed investment.

Measures are being taken to improve credit outflow from banks, which have also begun to transmit interest rate cuts to borrowers, she said. Sitharaman will meet heads of public sector lenders on September 19 to review the transmission.

The Reserve Bank of India has since February cut the benchmark interest rate by 110 basis points but banks have lagged in transmitting the lower rates to borrowers. The government has been pressing banks to offer external benchmark linked loans to speed up the transmission of rate cuts.

India's GDP growth decreased for the fifth consecutive quarter in April-June 2019 to 5 per cent, the lowest in six years. This was on the back of faltering domestic demand, with both private consumption and investment proving lackluster.

The government's previous policy measures to stimulate the economy included support for the automobile sector, reduction in capital gains tax, and additional liquidity support for shadow banks. Accompanying structural reforms included a further easing of the foreign direct investment (FDI) regime and consolidation of the public banking sector. When asked if the government was reassessing its fiscal map, Sitharaman said: "Well it is a one quarter matter (5 per cent growth) but then we will be definitely taking that on board and reconcile it with what I have stated in the Budget."

The growth numbers are "now very different from what we had said in the Budget. We will certainly reconcile...and take a call at what stage we are and what level we are," she added.

The Ballad of...

The book is also available at Rachna Books.

Illustrator of the book, Chewang Rinchen Lepcha is a graduate of National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and has worked on the Animation Design of several award winning projects which have earned worldwide acclaim. He is presently with Echostream, Gangtok as Senior Communication Designer.

Mr Lepcha informed that the book has been in the making for around 3 years.

"The author has written very beautifully so it made it easy for me to illustrate. I was also a boarder at TNA so that helped me as well," he said. After completing his graduation, Chewang worked in Mumbai for some time before coming back to Gangtok.

A portion from the sale of the book will be spent for the development of sports in rural parts of the State.

In his foreword, Bhaichung Bhutia has also shared his memories of his teacher, Sir Lenny and called him a mentor and a friend. He also highly appreciated the illustration done by Chewang Rinchen Lepcha.

"I am proud of both of them, and wish the book every success!" he said.

The preface of the book is written by former Principal of TNA who served the school from 1989 to 96, who also shared some of his memories of Bhaichung Bhutia.

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

The anthyesti Kriya of Nar Bdr Gurung, rtd, Record Officer Health dept and also Vice President in Paramedical who left for his heavenly abode on 5th of September 2019. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering of prayers for the departed soul on 18.09.2019 at Ahley, Namthang south Sikkim



Family Members

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Shah's Hindi pitch invites TN parties' wrath

CHENNAI, SEP 14 (PTI): Opposing Home Minister Amit Shah's pitch for Hindi as the nation's common language, AIADMK on Saturday cautioned against its 'imposition' while the DMK demanded that he withdraw his view, since it would "infringe national integrity."

After Shah said Hindi is the most spoken language which can unite the nation as a common language, Tamil Nadu parties rallied against it.

AIADMK leader and Tamil culture Minister K Pandiarajan said: "if the Centre imposes Hindi unilaterally, there will only be (adverse) reaction and no support, not only in Tamil Nadu, but also in states like Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh."

Making it clear that he was not aware of the context in which Shah made those comments, he opined that the remarks appeared to be intended to bring Hindi to the position of English, which had performed the role of a link language all along in the country.

"Only about 45 per cent people speak Hindi and even today it is not spoken by a majority of the people," Pandiarajan said, adding that the Tamil Nadu government has never toed the line that Hindi could be the link language. DMK chief M K Stalin said Shah's views were 'shocking'.

"This will certainly infringe national integrity and hence he should withdraw his views im-



mediately," he told reporters. The DMK would take a decision on the ways and means to oppose Shah's stand at a high-level party meet to be held on September 16, the party president said.

Pluralism was India's biggest strength and unity in diversity was the nation's cultural identity, Stalin said and alleged that the BJP government was taking steps to 'erase' such an identity ever since it assumed office at the Centre.

Shah's Hindi pitch appeared to be an attempt to make non-Hindi speaking people "second class citizens," he claimed earlier in a statement.

While all languages in the Constitution's Eighth Schedule should be nurtured, picking only Hindi for promotion will impinge national integrity and it is both anguishing and condemnable, the DMK chief alleged.

MDMK chief Vaiko said if India has to be a country of Hindi alone, then only Hindi speaking

states would be part of it and not several other regions like Tamil Nadu and the north east.

PMK founder leader S Ramadoss dubbed Shah's remark as flawed and said Hindi must not be "imposed."

PMK and BJP were part of the AIADMK alliance in Tamil Nadu for the recent Lok Sabha polls.

"Never can Hindi be India's identity globally... is it not condemnable to try to usurp the identities of other languages to make Hindi India's global identity," Ramadoss said in his Twitter handle.

Just because Hindi was spoken by a large number of people, it could not bring about integrity. "If Hindi is imposed on people speaking other languages, it will divide the country... there are several examples worldwide," he said.

CPI State Secretary R Mutharasan said Tamil speaking people should unite to thwart the Centre's policy of "linguistic

chauvinism." The assurance of Jawaharlal Nehru that Hindi will not be made compulsory as long as Tamil Nadu people accepted it voluntarily should be honoured, he said.

"The RSS, Hindutva forces are trying to build a narrative of one election, one nation, one nation card and a single language...they are rejecting the doctrine of national integrity and unity in diversity," the Left leader alleged in a statement.

Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam leader T T V Dhinakaran said Shah's views were not acceptable.

Urging the Home Minister to take back his view, he said efforts to "thrust Hindi" would only sow the seeds of hatred among the people.

Dravidian Kazhagam, the ideological fountainhead of Dravidian parties, said Shah's views went against the pluralistic tenets of the Constitution.

DK chief K Veeramani said the suspicion grew stronger that such views

were being aired only to divert attention from the economic slowdown. School Education Minister and veteran AIADMK leader K A Sengottaiyan said Chief Minister K Palaniswami had categorically stated that only the two language formula of Tamil and English would be followed in Tamil Nadu.

The state does not have Central government run Navodaya Vidyalaya schools to avoid 'imposition' of Hindi, he said.

Senior AIADMK leader and Fisheries Minister D Jayakumar said sticking to the two language norm was the unanimous stand of his party and it would be continued. "This is our view. No language not liked by the people will be accepted," he said recalling the anti-Hindi agitations of 1965.

The Congress-led government, which "thrust Hindi," was dislodged from power in 1967 state assembly elections and could not return to power in Tamil Nadu since then, he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah earlier in the day pitched for a common language for the country and said it is Hindi which is spoken the most and can unite the whole country.

"India has many languages and every language has its importance. But it is absolutely necessary that the entire country should have one language that becomes India's identity globally," he said in a series of tweets in Hindi.

SLSA organizes National Lok Adalat

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 SEPT:

Sikkim State Legal Services Authority (Sikkim SLSA) under the aegis of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) organized National Lok Adalat on 14 Sept, 2019.

The Lok Adalat Benches were constituted in all the four Districts of the State comprising of the Lok Adalat Judges and

'Other Persons'.

Pre Lok Adalat sittings were also held for identifying cases to be taken up during the National Lok Adalat.

As per a press release, out of 33 cases taken up by the various Lok Adalat Benches, 24 cases were settled and sum of Rs. 12,38,462 has been awarded.

The following types

of cases were taken up in the National Lok Adalat, viz. Criminal compoundable offences, Bank Recovery Cases, Money Suit, NI Act u/s138, MACT and other civil cases.

General Public are informed that the next National Lok Adalat will be organized by Sikkim SLSA on 14 Dec, 2019 (Saturday).

Swar Samrat Narayan Gopal's birthday celebrated

RUDRA KAUSHIK

GANGTOK, 14 SEPT:

The birth anniversary of Swar Samrat Narayan Gopal was celebrated in a grand manner in Gyalshing on 04 Oct, 2019. The program was organized with the objective of keeping alive the melodies and memories of the music maestro.

During the event, the convener of the program, Rajesh Thapa elaborated on how we have failed to honor

the Swar Samrat, while his contemporary, Elvis Presley is worshipped as a God in the other parts of the world.

"There are museums and libraries, contests and concerts in his name, throughout the year, whereas, we do not even remember, Narayan Gopal's birthday," said Mr Thapa.

The main objective of the program was to create awareness and tell our children about the

beauty of Nepali sugam sangit, with the help of musicians from Grand Stave Music School, Gangtok and a blend of senior and junior singers of Sikkim.

The program was supported by All Sikkim Arm Wrestling Association; Voluntary Blood Donors' Association; Sarvodaya Samaj, Lingchom; Hamro Samooaha, Gyalshing, Nari Shakti Samooaha and Press Club of Gyalshing.

Pillar in memory of Polish refugees unveiled in Maharashtra village

PUNE, SEP 14 (PTI):

A commemorative pillar for Polish refugee families which had made India their home during World War II was unveiled at Valivade village in western Maharashtra's Kolhapur district on Saturday. As their country was ravaged by invading armies, around 5,000 refugees from Poland lived at Valivade, 235 km from Pune, between 1942 to 1948.

A delegation from Poland, including 12 of the surviving refugees, arrived in Kolhapur for commemoration of 80th anniversary of their stay in India two days ago.

The memorial pillar was unveiled in the presence of the delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Marcin Przydacz.

A museum dedicated to Polish refugees would

be set up at the village, the Maharashtra government had announced two days ago.

An 'India Poland Business Meeting' was also held in the Kolhapur city on Saturday.

Speaking at a press conference afterwards, Przydacz called for enhancing cultural and business ties between the two countries.

CEO of LOT Polish Airlines, Rafal Milczarski, announced resumption of a direct flight between Warsaw and New Delhi after a gap of 25 years on this occasion.

Pressing for better connectivity between the two countries, he said there should be at least one daily flight between Mumbai and Warsaw.

Bhushan Gagrani, principal secretary to Maharashtra chief minister, said the state govern-

ment supports the idea of starting a direct flight between Warsaw and Mumbai or Pune.

Poland's ambassador to India Adam Burakowski and Rajya Sabha MP Sambhaji Chhatrapati were also present.

Przydacz noted that this year marks 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Poland.

The trade between India and Poland has been growing, he said, adding, "We hope it can be doubled in the next few years."

Sambhaji Chhatrapati said a Kolhapur-Poland Business Forum will be set up to nurture business ties between the city, which is an industrial hub, and Poland.

Ambassador Burakowski exhorted Indian industrialists to invest in Poland.

Merged entity of UBI, PNB, OBC to become operational from April 1 next year

KOLKATA, SEP 14 (PTI):

The amalgamated entity of United Bank of India (UBI), Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) will come into effect from April 1 next year, a top official said on Saturday.

The merged unit, likely to have a new name, will be the second largest bank in the country after State Bank of India (SBI) with a total business volume of Rs 18 lakh crore.

"The amalgamation process will take some time and the new entity will start functioning from April 1, 2020," MD and CEO of UBI, Ashok Kumar Pradhan, said.

The three banks held a customer meet here, which was attended by Chander Khurana, GM of Punjab National Bank and Binay Kumar Gupta, GM of Oriental Bank of Commerce.

The lenders said that there will no retrenchment of staff in the merged entity, and also ruled out the possibility of bringing in Voluntary Retirement



Scheme (VRS). Pradhan later told reporters that the combined staff strength post the amalgamation will be 1 lakh with 11,400 branches.

Finance Minister Nirjala Sitharaman had on August 30 announced the consolidation of 10 state-run banks into four large-scale lenders.

Pradhan said the amalgamation process will require legal and regulatory compliances, besides approval of the three banks' boards.

"During the interim period, the three will continue to function independently," he said.

The government has already announced a cap-

ital infusion of Rs 16,000 crore into PNB and Rs 1,600 crore into UBI.

"The merged entity will be adequately capitalised and comply with Basel requirements for the next three years," the senior UBI official said.

To a query, Khurana said the average net NPA of the three banks is 6.67 per cent, which is expected to fall below 6 per cent post the amalgamation.

On the share-swap ratio, Pradhan said that valuers will be appointed separately, following which a merchant banker will determine the fair value. "After that, the swap ratio will be decided," he said.

Karnataka parties call Hindi Diwas "imposition" of language

BENGALURU, SEP 14 (PTI): 'Hindi Diwas' took a political twist in Karnataka with the Congress and JD(S) leaders terming it as an 'imposition' of the language.

However, the ruling BJP batted for learning it just like Kannada and appealed to the people of the state not to treat it as imposition of a language.

The reaction of the parties comes in the wake of Union Home minister Amit Shah pitching for a common language for the country and saying it was Hindi which was spoken the most and can unite the whole country.

Tweeting in Kannada, former chief minister Siddaramaiah said, "The lie that Hindi is a national language should stop."

Let it be known to all that it is just like Kannada, one among the 22 official languages of India.

You cannot promote a language by spreading lies and fake information. Languages flourish by affection and respect for each other."

However, the Congress leader reminded that he was not opposed to Hindi but the attempt to impose a language.

"Languages are the window of knowledge. It should be nurtured by love and not by force. I too oppose the Hindi Diwas celebrations," he tweeted.

JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy sought to know from Prime Minister Narendra Modi when 'Kannada Diwas' would

be organised across the country.

"The Central government is celebrating 'Hindi Diwas'. When will you celebrate Kannada Diwas Mr Narendra Modi, which is also an official language like Hindi? Remember that the people of Karnataka are part of the federal system," Kumaraswamy tweeted.

He ran a hashtag 'Stop Hindi Imposition.'

On the other hand, Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar pitched for learning Hindi.

"We learnt Hindi watching former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's lecture in chaste Hindi.

He was the first leader from India who gave his lecture in Hindi," said the minister speaking at the Hindi Diwas and organised by the district administration at Chamarajajagar.

The minister said Hindi should be given equal place just as Kannada.

He also assured the Hindi teachers of addressing their grievances.

Siddaramaiah had on Friday cried foul over not holding the bank clerk recruitment exam, conducted by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, in Kannada.

Meanwhile, a pro-Kannada outfit has warned of agitations from October 1, if the Centre 'imposes' Hindi in the state.

Issue of linking social media profiles with Aadhaar needs to be decided at the earliest: SC

NEW DELHI, SEP 13 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Friday said the issue of linking of social media profiles with Aadhaar needs to be decided at the earliest.

A bench of justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose said, "At this stage we do not know whether we could decide this issue or the high court will decide".

The bench further said it will not go into the merits of the case and would simply decide the transfer petition filed by Facebook seeking transfer of such cases pending before high courts of Madras, Bombay and Madhya Pradesh to the top court.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that it has no objection to transfer of the cases from high courts to the top court.

The Tamil Nadu government had on Thursday claimed in the apex court that Facebook Inc and other social media companies were not complying with Indian laws, resulting in "increased lawlessness" and difficulties in "detecting crimes".

It had sought modification of the August 20 order of the apex court directing the Madras High Court to continue hearing of pleas for linkage of social media profiles with biometric ID Aadhaar but restraining it from passing any effective orders.

The high court is at an advanced stage of hear-

ing but due to the apex court's August 20 order, it had deferred the hearings on those petitions, the state government had said.

Referring to different criminal cases, the state government had said local law enforcement authorities have attempted to seek information from these companies for investigation and detection of crimes on several occasions. It had said that these companies ask authorities to send letters of rogatory "despite operating on Indian soil" and have in all cases "failed to provide complete information".

The state government had also submitted that the transfer petition of Facebook Inc filed before the court seeking to transfer cases from Madras, Bombay and Madhya Pradesh High Courts is replete with "false and misleading averments" and is a blatant attempt to misguide the Court for oblique motives.

On August 20, the apex court had sought response from the Centre, Google, WhatsApp, YouTube and others on Facebook Inc's plea seeking transfer of cases related to linking of social media accounts with Aadhaar, pending in different high courts to the apex court.

Facebook Inc has contended that whether service providers can be asked to share data with probe agencies to help them in criminal investigation needs to be decided by the apex court as it

Visit Sikkim

A destination still awaiting professional packaging

Sikkim's tourism graph has been on a consistent upward swing over the past two decades. Those in the sector will recall times when tourist arrivals used to be in the mere hundreds and of how it grew to thousands, broke the one lakh mark (this in the past two decades) and now, when, despite lean seasons, the state hosts more tourists than it has people in residence. There was the hiccup of the 2011 Earthquake which spoiled about a season and a half and then there was the Darjeeling situation and the Doklam confusion which upset some seasons. On the average though, Sikkim has grown substantially from a destination that people stumbled upon when left with free days on an itinerary for Darjeeling to now becoming a stand-alone destination with its own clientele and with a whole array of tourist spots, most with their own niche visitors.

This has been a praiseworthy transition and those in the travel trade should pat themselves on the back. What one cannot lose sight of here is that there were many outside factors which led to Sikkim's growth as a tourist destination. The turmoil in the neighbouring Darjeeling hills and Sikkim's presence as a ready alternative, the closing down of Jammu & Kashmir for tourist traffic, the congestion on other tourist destinations like Nepal and Himachal Pradesh and the ever inquisitive zeal of inveterate travellers to seek out new destinations; all these are the real factors which contributed to the tourism boom in Sikkim. As far as professional packaging goes though, Sikkim still has more to learn and implement. And that is a good thing really because adding that to the mix will take the sector to the next level. In this age of information and marketing, for instance, Sikkim has still not worked out that one element of the Sikkim experience that it wants to promote and sell over everything else. No event/ destination/ experience is yet synonymous with Sikkim when every tourist destination has at least one special week in the year when tourists know they are assured of a special treat. And it is not as if Sikkim does not have enough events happening which would excite tourists. But it has wasted most of the events with unprofessional planning and bureaucratic organization, so much so that most 'tourist festivals' are not even organized anymore. The traditional events and occasions have also lacked coherent projections and still await professional packaging. Tourist festivals, even when they are held, are hastily put together and inadequately promoted. These are not events that are targeted to attract only locals. But if it is tourists that the organizers seek, then the events should be worked out much more in advance and publicised more widely giving prospective visitors enough time to plan their vacations. Even when flawlessly planned, tourist festivals take several years to become mega-events as word of mouth and mass media publicity catches on.

And it is not even as if tourist festivals are necessary. Sikkim, with its Khangchendzonga, Buddhist heritage, new pilgrimage destinations like the Char Dham, border trade haat, lakes and trekking routes is already cast in the perfect foil for a tourist destination of much bigger potential than what it receives at present.

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Why Sikhs wear a turban and what it means to practice the faith in the United States

SIMRAN JEET SINGH
theconversation.com

An elderly Sikh gentleman in Northern California, 64-year-old Parmjit Singh, was recently stabbed to death while taking a walk in the evening. Authorities are still investigating the killer's motive, but community members have asked the FBI to investigate the killing.

For many among the estimated 500,000 Sikhs in the U.S., it wouldn't be the first time. According to the Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh civil rights organization in North America, this is the seventh such attack on an elderly Sikh with a turban in the past eight years.

As a scholar of the tradition and a practicing Sikh myself, I have studied the harsh realities of what it means to be a Sikh in America today. I have also experienced racial slurs from a young age.

I have found there is little understanding of who exactly the Sikhs are and what they believe. So here's a primer.

FOUNDER OF SIKHISM

The founder of the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak, was born in 1469 in the Punjab region of South Asia, which is currently split between Pakistan and the northwestern area of India. A majority of the global Sikh population still resides in Punjab on the Indian side of the border.

From a young age, Guru Nanak was disillusioned by the social inequities and religious hypocrisies he observed around him. He believed that a single divine force created the entire world and resided within it. In his belief, God was not separate from the world and watching from a distance, but fully present in every aspect of creation.

He therefore asserted that all people are equally divine and deserve to be treated as such.

To promote this vision of divine oneness and social equality, Guru Nanak created institutions and religious practices. He established community centers and places of worship, wrote his own scriptural compositions and institutionalized a system of leadership (gurus) that would carry forward his vision.

The Sikh view thus rejects all social distinctions that produce inequities, including gender, race, religion and caste, the predominant structure for social hierarchy in South Asia.

Serving the world is a natural expression of the Sikh prayer and worship. Sikhs call this prayerful service "sewa," and it is a core part of their practice.

THE SIKH IDENTITY

In the Sikh tradition, a truly religious person is one who cultivates the spiritual self while also serving the communities around them – or a saint-soldier. The saint-soldier ideal applies to women and men alike.

In this spirit, Sikh women and men maintain five articles of faith, popularly known as the five Ks. These are: kes (long, uncut hair), kara (steel bracelet), kanga (wooden comb), kirpan (small sword) and kachera (soldier-shorts).

Although little historical evidence exists to explain why these particular articles were chosen, the five Ks continue provide the community with a collective identity, binding together individuals on the basis of a shared belief and practice. As I understand, Sikhs cherish these articles of faith as gifts from their gurus.

Turbans are an important part of the Sikh identity. Both women and men may wear turbans. Like the articles of faith, Sikhs regard their turbans as gifts given by their beloved gurus, and their meaning is deeply personal. In South Asian culture, wearing a turban typically indicated one's social

upon their arrival. For instance, the first race riot targeting Sikhs took place in Bellingham, Washington, in 1907. Angry mobs of white men rounded up Sikh laborers, beat them up and forced them to leave town.

The discrimination continued over the years. For instance, when my father moved from Punjab to the United States in the 1970s, racial slurs like "Ayatollah" and "raghead" were hurled at him. It was a time when 52 American diplomats and citizens were taken captive in Iran and tension between the two countries was high. These slurs reflected the racist backlash against those who fitted the stereotypes of Iranians. Our family faced a similar racist backlash when the U.S. engaged in the Gulf War during the early 1990s.

INCREASE IN HATE CRIMES

The racist attacks spiked again after 9/11, par-



status – kings and rulers once wore turbans. The Sikh gurus adopted the turban, in part, to remind Sikhs that all humans are sovereign, royal and ultimately equal.

SIKHS IN AMERICA

Today, there are approximately 30 million Sikhs worldwide, making Sikhism the world's fifth-largest major religion.

After British colonizers in India seized power of Punjab in 1849, where a majority of the Sikh community was based, Sikhs began migrating to various regions controlled by the British Empire, including Southeast Asia, East Africa and the United Kingdom itself. Based on what was available to them, Sikhs played various roles in these communities, including military service, agricultural work and railway construction.

The first Sikh community entered the United States via the West Coast during the 1890s. They began experiencing discrimination immediately

particularly because many Americans did not know about the Sikh religion and may have conflated the unique Sikh appearance with popular stereotypes of what terrorists look like. News reports show that in comparison to the past decade, the rates of violence against Sikhs have surged.

Elsewhere too, Sikhs have been victims of hate crimes. An Ontario member of Parliament, Gurrattan Singh, was recently heckled with Islamophobic comments by a man who perceived Singh as a Muslim.

As a practicing Sikh, I can affirm that the Sikh commitment to the tenets of their faith, including love, service and justice, keeps them resilient in the face of hate. For these reasons, for many Sikh Americans, like myself it is rewarding to maintain the unique Sikh identity.

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Mass extinctions made life on Earth more diverse – and might again

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In the past half-billion years, Earth has been hit again and again by mass extinctions, wiping out most species on the planet. And every time, life recovered and ultimately went on to increase in diversity.

Is life just incredibly resilient, or is something else going on? Could mass extinctions actually help life diversify and succeed – and if so, how? Given that we're currently facing another extinction event, there's extra urgency in trying to work out how mass extinctions affect diversity.

Mass extinction is probably the most striking pattern in the fossil record. Vast numbers of species – even entire families – disappear rapidly, simultaneously, around the world. Extinction on this scale usually requires some kind of global environmental catastrophe, so severe and so rapid that species can't evolve, and instead disappear.

Massive volcanic eruptions drove the extinctions at the end of the Devonian, Permian and Triassic periods. Global cooling and intense glaciation drove the Ordovician-Silurian extinctions. An asteroid caused the end-Cretaceous extinction of the dinosaurs. These "Big Five" extinctions get the most attention because, well, they're the biggest. But lots of lesser yet still civilisation-threatening events occurred as well, like the pulse of extinction before the end-Permian event.

These events were indescribably destructive. The Chicxulub asteroid impact that ended the Cretaceous period shut down photosynthesis for years and caused decades of global

cooling. Anything that couldn't shelter from the cold, or find food in the darkness – which was most species – perished. Perhaps 90% of all species disappeared in just a few years.

But life bounced back and the recovery was rapid. 90% of mammal species were eliminated by the asteroid, but they recovered and then some within 300,000 years, going on to evolve into horses, whales, bats and our primate ancestors. Birds and fish experienced similarly rapid recovery and radiation. And many other organisms – snakes, tuna and swordfish, butterflies and ants, grasses, orchids and asters – evolved or diversified at the same time.

This pattern of recovery and diversification happened after every mass extinction. The end-Permian extinction saw mammal-like species take a hit, but reptiles flourished afterward. After the reptiles suffered during the end-Triassic event, the surviving dinosaurs took over the planet and diversified. Although a mass extinction ended the dinosaurs, they only evolved in the first place because of mass extinction.

Despite this chaos, life slowly diversified over the past 500m years. In fact, several things hint that extinction drives this increased diversity. For one, the most rapid periods of diversity increase occur immediately after mass extinctions. But perhaps more striking, recovery isn't only driven by an increase in species numbers.

In a recovery, animals innovate – finding new ways of making a living. They exploit new habitats, new foods, new means of locomotion. For example, our fish-like forebears first crawled onto land after the end-De-

vonian extinction.

EVOLUTIONARY INNOVATION

Extinction doesn't only drive this process of speciation. It also drives evolutionary innovation. It's not a coincidence that the biggest pulse of innovation in life's history – the evolution of complex animals in the Cambrian Explosion – happened in the wake of the extinction of the Ediacaran animals that went before them.

Innovation may increase the number of species that can coexist because it allows species to move into new niches, instead of fighting over the old ones. Fish crawling onto land didn't compete with fish in the seas. Bats hunting at night with sonar didn't compete with birds that were active during the day. Innovation means evolution isn't a zero-sum game. Species can diversify without driving others extinct. But why does extinction drive innovation?

Stable ecosystems may prevent innovation. A modern wolf is probably a far more dangerous predator than a velociraptor, but a tiny mammal couldn't evolve into a wolf in the Cretaceous because there were velociraptors. Any experiments in carnivory would have ended badly, with the poorly adapted mammal competing with – or just eaten by – the already well-adapted Velociraptor.

But, in the lulls after an extinction, evolution may be able to experiment with designs that are initially poorly adapted, but with long-term potential. With the show's stars gone, the evolutionary understudies get their chance to prove themselves.

The extinction of Velociraptor gave mammals the freedom to experiment with new niches. Initially, they were poorly equipped for a preda-

tory lifestyle, but without dinosaurs competing with or eating them, they didn't need to be terribly good to survive. They only needed to be as good as the other things around at the time. So they flourished in an ecological vacuum, ultimately evolving into big, fast, intelligent pack hunters.

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

Life isn't just resilient, it thrives on adversity. Life will even recover from the current wave of human-induced extinctions. If we disappeared tomorrow, then species would evolve to replace woolly mammoths, dodo birds and the passenger pigeon, and life would likely become even more diverse than before. That's not to justify complacency. It won't happen in our lifetime, or even the lifetime of our species, but millions of years from now.

This idea that extinction drives innovation may even apply to human history. The extinction of ice-age megafauna must have decimated hunter-gatherer bands, but it also may have given farming a chance to develop. The Black Death produced untold human suffering, but the shakeup of political and economic systems may have led to the Renaissance.

Economists talk about creative destruction, the idea that creating a new order means destroying the old one. But evolution suggests there's another kind of creative destruction, where the destruction of the old system creates a vacuum and actually drives the creation of something new and often better. When things are at their worst is precisely when the opportunity is the greatest.

[The writer is Senior lecturer, palaeontology, Milner Centre for Evolution, University of Bath]

India beat Bangladesh by five runs to lift U-19 Asia Cup title



COLOMBO, SEP 14 (PTI): Left-arm spinner Atharva Ankolekar returned with a five-wicket haul to help India clinch the U-19 Asia Cup title with a thrilling five-run win over Bangladesh in a low-scoring final here on Saturday. Defending a paltry total of 106, India dismissed Bangladesh for 101 in 33 overs, courtesy 18-year-old Ankolekar, who emerged as the star of the Indian team with figures of 5 for 28 from 8 overs.

While Ankolekar spun a web of spin to derail Bangladesh's chase, he was supported well by pacer Akash Singh, who accounted for three wickets. V Patil (1/25) and SS Mishra (1/27) also chipped in with one wicket each at the R Premadasa Stadium here.

Chasing a small target of 107, skipper Akbar Ali (23) and Mritunjay Chowdhury (21) kept Bangladesh in the hunt.

After they were back to the pavillion, Tanzim Hasan Sakib (12) and Rakibul Hasan (11) raised hopes of a Bangladesh win before India fought back to bun-

dle them out.

Earlier, skipper Dhruv Jurel (33) and lower-order batsman Karan Lal (37) came up with useful contributions to help India cross the 100-run mark.

India's decision to bat first after winning the toss backfired big time as left-arm pacer Mritunjay Chowdhury (3/18) and off-spinner Shamim Hossain (3/8) wreaked havoc on the Indian batsmen. Opener Arjun Azad was the first to go as he was caught behind by Akbar Ali off Tanzim

Hasan Sakib's bowling in the third over.

In the next over, NT Tilak Varma was sent back by Mritunjay with Tanzid Hasan taking another catch and after the other opener SV Parkar was run out by Tanzid Hasan, India U-19 team had slipped to 8 for 3.

Shashwat Rawat (19) and skipper Jurel then steadied the ship and brought up the team fifty before the former was trapped leg-before by Hossain in the 15th over.

Two balls later, Varun Lavande (0) was dismissed for naught by

Hossain as India U-19 lost half their side for 5 for five in 14.4 overs.

Atharva Ankolekar (2) was then run-out in the 20th over, while Hossain accounted for Jurel in the next over.

In 26th over, Sushant Mishra (3) walked back to the pavillion when he was caught by Akbar Ali off Shahin Alam's bowling, while Vidyadhar Patil was removed by Mritunjay in the next over.

Karan was the last batsman to be dismissed as India U-19 were bundled out for a paltry score of 106 in 32.4 overs.

Deb to hold 'Janatar Darbar' in Tripura districts

AGARTALA, SEP 14 (PTI): Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Saturday said he will hold 'Janatar Darbar' in all the districts of the state to establish direct communication with people and resolve their problems.

The 'Janatar Darbar' will be a means of direct communication between the people and the Chief Minister, an official said.

"I couldn't meet people of my state properly due to shortage of time. But when they seek help on my Facebook page, I immediately respond to solve their problems. I will start the 'Janatar Darbar' soon in every district to communi-

cate with people at the grassroots directly and address their problems", Deb said at a function here.

After coming to power in the state in 2018, Deb used to hold 'Janatar Darbar' in Agartala.

He inaugurated a new court building of West Tripura Judicial district here on Saturday.

Referring to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's comment to make the north-east a drug-free region by 2022 at a recent meeting of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Guwahati, Deb said Tripura will meet the target before deadline.

He claimed Tripura

is the first state in the north-east region to start initiatives to make the state drug-free.

He also said drug peddlers are "active" in the region including Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya and drugs are being smuggled into Tripura.

"I had informed the menace to all the chief ministers of the north eastern states. All of them have come together to make the region free of drugs and illegal arms", Deb said.

He urged the judges to take strict actions against the drug peddlers, land mafias and culprits who commit crime against women.

Mamata expresses commitment to farmers welfare, promoting industry in Bengal



KOLKATA, SEP 14 (PTI): Celebrating the third anniversary of distribution of parghas (documents) to farmers of Singur, whose land was forcibly acquired by the Left Front government for Tata's Nano factory, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday expressed commitment to the welfare of peasants and also to promote industry in the state.

The Trinamool Congress supremo, on this day in 2016, had handed over land parghas to 9,117 farmers and cheques to 806 people of Singur and had described the occasion as a "historic day".

"Today marks the third anniversary of the historic day when our Govt of #Bangla handed over to farmers the

parghas of land forcibly acquired in Singur", Banerjee wrote on her Twitter handle. "We reiterate our commitment to the welfare of farmers, alongside promoting industry. My humble pronam to Maa, Mati, Manush," she added.

"Ma, Mati, Manush" (mother, motherland and people) was a political slogan coined by Banerjee before 2009 general election. It eventually became the signature slogan of Banerjee and her party.

The TMC chief had steered the massive agitation against the land acquisition for Tata's Nano car factory in Singur in 2006.

Incidentally, on Friday around 60 activists of the Students Federation of India (SFI) and Democratic Youth Fed-

eration of India (DYFI) were wounded after they clashed with police in course of their march towards the state secretariat demanding employment for the youth of the state. The activists had taken out a rally on Thursday from Singur, the venue of the abandoned Tata small car plant, demanding jobs for the youth of the state.

Singur had become the hotbed of West Bengal politics in 2008 after the Trinamool Congress of Mamata Banerjee led an agitation against the erstwhile Left Front government over acquisition of farm land for the car factory.

The TMC agitation eventually led to the exit of the proposed small car factory and catapulted Banerjee to power in 2011.

Names of all NRC applicants published online

GUWAHATI, SEPT 14 (PTI): A complete NRC list comprising names of all the included and excluded 3.30 crore applicants as per draft NRC and supplementary list of inclusions and exclusions (final NRC) were published online on Saturday. The list will be available only online and has been published in English and Assamese language.

The exclusion certificates required for filing appeals in the Foreigners' Tribunals are, however, yet to be issued, sources in the office of the NRC State Coordinator said here.

The final National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was published on August 31 consisted only of supplementary lists. The names of persons included in the complete draft published on July 30, 2018 but having spelling or other mistakes have been corrected in the complete list, they said.

Names of all members of a family irrespective of their involvement in the claims and objections process have been published, the official said. The exclusion certificates are being collected from the various NRC Seva Kendras and will be made available to the public at the earliest so that they can file appeals, the official said.

The time period for issuing exclusion certificates will be announced soon, he said.

Queries are being received about the availability of the certified copies of rejection from final NRC. The people are aware that hearings were held at various venues away from their designated NRC Seva Kendras and the process of collection of these certificates are going on, the offi-

cial added. The appeal against exclusion from the NRC must be filed in the Foreigners' Tribunals within 120 days of the publication of final NRC.

The final NRC was released on August 31 with 19,06,657 of the total 3,30,27,661 applicants excluded and 3,11,22,004 included.

The process of NRC Update was started in Assam following a Supreme Court order in 2013 and since then, the apex court had closely monitored the entire process.

The process of receipt of NRC application forms started in May 2015 and ended on 31st August 2015. A total of 3,30,27,661 people applied through 68,37,660 application forms.

The particulars submitted by the applicants were taken up for scrutiny to determine eligibility of their inclusion in NRC, he said.

Adequate opportunity of being heard has been given to all persons at every stage of the process, Hajela said. The entire process was conducted as per statutory provisions and due procedure was followed at every stage, he said.

As per the Supreme Court orders, the draft NRC (complete draft) was published on 30th July, 2018 wherein 2,89,83,677 numbers of persons were found eligible for inclusion. Thereafter, claims were received from 36,26,630 numbers of persons against exclusions.

Objections were received against inclusion of 1,87,633 persons whose names had appeared in the complete draft. Another additional draft exclusions list was published on June 26, 2019 wherein 1,02,462 persons were excluded.

Three Assam police constables, two homeguards suspended for dacoity

MORIGAON (ASSAM), SEPT 14 (PTI): Three Assam Police constables and two home guard personnel were suspended from service on Saturday for committing highway dacoity and looting Rs 3.89 lakh from two businessmen in Morigaon district in the early hours of the day. According to Moriga-

on district superintendent of police Swapnanil Deka the policemen and the homeguards of Dhamantul police station followed a vehicle carrying cement on NH 37.

They waylaid the truck and took away the money from two businessmen travelling in the vehicle at gunpoint, Deka

said. On being informed about the incident Deka said he immediately swung into action and suspended the three policemen and two home guards with immediate effect.

A dacoity case has also been registered against the five and they were arrested in this connection, he added.

Chinmayanand case: Student gives pen drive with videos to SIT

SHAHJAHANPUR (UP), SEP 14 (PTI): The post-graduate student who has accused BJP leader Chinmayanand of rape on Saturday gave a pen drive containing 43 videos to the SIT to support her allegations.

The woman was asked by the SIT to submit whatever evidence she had against the former Union minister. The special investigation team questioned the student on Friday and collected evidence from Chinmayanand's bedroom here, sources said on Saturday.

The SIT, formed on the orders of the Supreme Court, had brought the woman to Chinmayanand's home on Friday morning where they continued the probe for around five hours, the sources said.

The special team has called the student's mother for questioning on Saturday, they said.

Chinmayanand, whose organisation runs several colleges, was questioned for about seven hours at the police lines here on Thursday night and his bedroom at Divya Dham residence was sealed, they said.

A team of forensic experts was also present at the residence.

The woman alleged that important evidence

has been removed from Chinmayanand's bedroom and it now wears a new look.

"The paint and other things have been changed and it now has a new look. Important evidence has been removed from there but two oil bowls, used during massage, were found by the SIT," she said, adding that a towel, toothpaste and soap used by the BJP leader was sealed and taken away by the forensic team.

The woman said she told the probe team about a young BA-LLB student who was also being tortured and had confided in her about her harassment.

The postgraduate student said she has also given her statement about the FIR lodged in New Delhi on September 5.

Recounting her ordeal, she said that after she took admission in LLM, Chinmayanand's men called her to his home and left her in a room on the upper floor where the former minister showed her a video of her having a bath, after which her physical exploitation began.

The woman, however, said that this video was not found by the probe agency in the bedroom

and claimed that it could have been kept in Chinmayanand's Haridwar ashram.

Chinmayanand's Counsel Om Singh refuted argued that giving massage was not a crime and people go to spa for it.

"Besides, the video does not show anything being done under pressure," Singh.

Sources said the BJP leader has been asked by the SIT not to leave Shahjahanpur till the completion of the probe and policemen in large numbers have been deployed in and around his residence.

The college where the woman studied was closed since Friday and will now open on Monday, the sources said.

The woman has alleged that she was raped and "physically exploited" for a year by the BJP leader. Chinmayanand's lawyer has, however, alleged an extortion attempt.

The woman first levelled harassment charges against the BJP leader in a video clip uploaded on social media. She was then missing for several days before an Uttar Pradesh police team traced her in Rajasthan and produced her before the Supreme Court.

'U17 Women WC crucial for Indian football'

NEW PANVEL (MAHA), SEP 14 (PTI): Football Delhi chief Shaji Prabhakaran on Saturday said the upcoming U-17 Women's FIFA World Cup, to be hosted by India, will provide impetus to the sport in the country.

After India hosted the U17 World Cup for Men's in 2017, it is set to host the U17 Women's World Cup in 2020 and Bhuvaneshwar has been confirmed as one of provisional venues for the tournament.

"I would say it would boost the development of Women's football in India because the (Indian) girls will play for the first time (in the World Cup). It will open the doors as more girls will participate in football tournaments and it (the hosting of World Cup) will create positive environment for the growth of the game," Prabhakaran, who has worked with FIFA in the past, told reporters here.

Despite Delhi not being in the list of provisional venues for the World Cup, Prabhakaran assured whole-hearted support for the tournament.

He also hailed the recent goal-less draw secured by India, led by custodian Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, against Asian Champions Qatar.

Prabhakaran along with Vita Dani, co-owner of Indian Super League club Chennaiyin FC, attended the opening ceremony of the Pillai Executive Programme in Sports Management in collaboration with FIFA, the world governing body for football and Switzerland-based International Centre for Sports Studies at the Pillai Group of Institutions here.

Woods blog sparks speculation he'll play in Presidents Cup

LOS ANGELES, SEPT 14 (AFP): Speculation swirled that superstar Tiger Woods will choose himself to play in the Presidents Cup as captain of the US team thanks to an enigmatic sign-off on a blog post.

In the US captain's blog posted on the US PGA Tour website, Woods says the eight US players already selected are "fired up" for the match play showdown between America and the International team, which will be held at Royal Melbourne in December. "As a captain, I couldn't have asked for a more engaged and excited group of guys," Woods says in a lengthy post which he signed: U.S. Team Captain (crossed out) Playing Captain.

It's not the first time one of these blogs has been signed that way, and it remains unclear if Woods will name himself to play when he makes his four captain's picks for the team on November 4. Since winning his 15th major title at the Masters in April Woods has made only six starts, missing two cuts and withdrawing from one event. Woods revealed in late August that he had undergone keyhole surgery to repair cartilage in his left knee, but he still expects to tee it up at the PGA Tour's inaugural Zozo championship in Japan in October.

Captain Kohli and a few youngsters begin World T20 preparation

KUSHAN SARKAR DHARAMSALA, SEP 14 (PTI): Virat Kohli will be venturing into the unknown with a clean slate, where a few seasoned hands will be backing a group of immensely talented youngsters, in his quest for World T20 title which begins with a three-match bilateral series against South Africa here on Sunday.

The 3-0 series win against the West Indies could be called a pre-cursor as it was just after enduring a disappointing end to their ODI World Cup campaign.

The real battle begins now with this series against Quinton de Kock and Kagiso Rabada, who are also in the midst of a tough transition phase.

A good spell from Rabada or a cameo from David Miller could pose challenge for the Indians, while some of the others like Test specialist Temba Bavuma or Anrich Nortje will like to prove their credentials in absence of Faf du Plessis or Hashim Amla.

There will be around 20 odd matches for captain Kohli and head coach Ravi Shastri to build a near perfect combination going into the World T20 in Australia in October next year.

There are many questions that the team management will have to answer in the next 13 months during which IPL will also be held. Save



Kohli, his deputy Rohit Sharma, all-rounder Hardik Pandya and premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah (rested for this series), at least seven slots in playing XI and four more in the 15-member squad are up for grabs, with some bold steps on cards.

Retirement is Mahendra Singh Dhoni's individual call but does the team management intend to look ahead like the selection committee does?

It is yet to be known and Rishabh Pant's indiscretions doesn't make it easier for Kohli and Shastri.

Manish Pandey has been in and around for years now and despite the kind of quality he possesses, the Karnataka batsman has not inspired highest confidence in the

chances he got. So will it be Pandey at No 4 or Delhi Capitals captain Shreyas Iyer, who was in fine form during the Windies one dayers?

The other fascinating aspect will be the future of spin twins Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, at least in the shortest version. Rajasthan leg-spinner Rahul Chahar is a young talent and is being billed as one for the future.

And with all-rounder Krunal Pandya also shaping up well and Ravindra Jadeja's experience set to come in handy, where does it leave the much in demand wrist spin duo, who had replaced Ravichandran Ashwin and Jadeja (for the better part) post 2017 Champions Trophy. Not to for-

get, India have a back up finger spinner in young Washington Sundar, who in his U-19 days was a hard-hitting top-order batsman. So next question is where does it leave Kuldeep and Chahal in T20 scheme of things?

Last but not the least is the pace department where Bumrah is the only certainty.

Deepak Chahar, who many in Indian cricket term as 'Poor Man's Praveen Kumar' for the movement he generates during first spell, is an inspired investment for shortest version.

And then there is Navdeep Saini with raw pace and Khaleel Ahmed bringing in the left-arm variety but known to leak runs. Will they be persist-

ed with in the long run? In next 13 months, Kohli will seek all the answers.

SQUADS:

India: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Krunal Pandya, Washington Sundar, Rahul Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini.

South Africa: Quinton de Kock (c), Rassie van der Dussen (vc), Temba Bavuma, Junior Dala, Bjorn Fortuin, Beuran Hendricks, Reeza Hendricks, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Traza Shamsi, George Linde.

Match Starts 7 pm.

Smith unfazed by burden of Australia run-scoring

LONDON, SEPT 14 (AFP): Steve Smith refused to blame his inconsistent teammates for their batting failures during the Ashes after he again shouldered the run-scoring burden for Australia.

The former skipper scored 80 at the Oval -- his lowest total of a sensational series -- as the tourists were bowled out for 225, 69 runs short of England's first-innings total of 294 on the second day of the fifth and final Test.

Smith has now amassed 751 runs, a sizeable chunk of the team's overall tally of 2,508 runs over the entire series even though he has missed three of the nine innings after being hit by a Jofra Archer bouncer.

When he was asked for reasons for Australia's batting failures he said conditions had not been kind throughout the series but that players would learn from performing in unfamiliar conditions. "We haven't seen any huge totals really throughout the whole series so it's not been easy," he said.

"There's always been something there, I felt. If you bowl in good areas for long enough then I think we've seen you'll get rewards."

"Playing in England is completely different from playing back home and you've got to find ways to play away from home," he added.

"Sometimes you need to change certain little things that can help you play in certain conditions and adapt accordingly

but I think it will be a good learning curve for all of our batters."

- PRESSURES -

Smith said he was able to shut out pressures and focus on the job in hand despite the weight of expectation on his shoulders.

"I just sort of do my thing and what people say it doesn't really bother me, it's just each time I go out to the middle I love batting and I just want to bat and score runs and help out the team," he said.

"People can say whatever they like, nice things, bad things, whatever. It really doesn't bother me."

The 30-year-old, lbw to Chris Woakes, was disappointed not to reach his fourth century of a stellar series on Friday but said he had struggled with "flu" during his innings.

England paceman Archer took six wickets to put his side in the driving seat and Smith was asked whether a great rivalry could develop between the pair.

But the Australian said it was too soon to tell.

"Who knows? When's the next Ashes series? I don't even know," he said. "Will I still be playing? I'm not sure. Who knows the answer to that? We'll see."

"He's a quality performer. He's got two five-fors in four Test matches (Archer has twice taken six wickets in an innings) and you don't get guys bowling 90 miles an hour growing on trees and with the skillset he's got.

Dismal start by India's Greco-Roman wrestlers at Worlds

AMANPREET SINGH NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN), SEP 14 (PTI): In a dismal start for India, all four Greco-Roman wrestlers in action on Saturday exited the World Championships without winning a single round here.

Competing in non-Olympic categories, Asian Championship silver medallist Harpreet Singh (82kg), Sagar (63kg), and Manjeet (55kg) could not even score a single point in their respective bouts.

Only Yogesh (72kg) resisted his American rival Raymond Anthony Bunker III before suffering a narrow 5-6 defeat.

"Patience ... patience. I was not patient enough," Yogesh was telling foreign coach Temo Kazarashvili after he lost the close bout.

"I have only myself to blame. I was close. If you look at the draw, I could have reached the semifinals if I had won this bout," said Yogesh.

The standard of Greco-Roman is "very poor" in India, said former world champion Kazarashvili.

"It will take a lot of time to bring improvements. The system needs to change. The process has begun and you have to wait for 2-3 years to see the results," he said.

"Greco Roman is not very popular in India. India needs to find more wrestlers in this style. You have to have children picking up this style, right from the school level." In his pre-quarter-

final bout, Yogesh, who had finished fourth at the Asian Championship, lost a point due to passivity and two more to trail 0-3.

Towards the end of the first period, the American pushed Yogesh out to take a healthy 4-0 lead.

Just before the end of the first minute in the second period, Yogesh earned a point and added four more with back-to-back gut-wrenches to lead 5-4.

However, he lost the lead on the counter-attack by Bunker, who made it 5-5 before settling the bout in his favour by pushing the Indian out.

In 82kg, Harpreet Singh was expected to put up at least a good fight but was outplayed by Petr Novak from Czech Republic.

Harpreet just pushed the shoulders and arms of his opponent to hand a passivity point to the Czech.

In the second period, Novak extended his lead with a two-point throw and successfully employed a Take-down to make it 5-0.

Time was running out fast but Harpreet could not do much and conceded two more points to lose the bout by a comprehensive 0-7 margin.

"I was down with fever. I could give my best today. The weight training had stopped because we came early here and it always affects. Also, I lost weight (81.4kg) because the diet is a huge issue in this city. I am a vegetari-

an and have been travelling for the last 25 days. I struggled to get good food," said Harpreet.

"Also, I was not good enough, I think, at this level. We have done better than the previous generation and probably the next one will do better than us."

In the toughest possible draw, Manjeet was pitted against reigning world champion Eldaniz Azizli from Azerbaijan in the pre-quarterfinals.

Manjeet gave his all but that was not enough as he lost by Technical Superiority.

Azizli lost his semi-final later, so Manjeet could not get a repechage round.

In the 63kg, Sagar could stay on the mat only for about two minutes, losing his qualification round by Technical Superiority to local wrestler Almat Kebispayev.

The Indian lost a point for passivity and then suffered two consecutive four-points throws to make an early exit. Since Kebispayev lost his semifinal to Rio Olympic silver medalist Shinobu Ota, Sagar's championship was over.

On Sunday, three Indians will chase Olympic qualification.

Manish will fight it out with Bulgaria's Devvid Tihomirov Dimitrov in 67kg while Sunil Kumar faces America's Joseph Patrick Rau in the 87kg.

In 97kg, Ravi will take on Taipei's Cheng Hao Chen in his opening round.

Kohli on Dhoni's future: He cares for Indian cricket and is on same page with us

DHARAMSALA, SEP 14 (PTI): Mahendra Singh Dhoni has always put the interest of Indian cricket in mind and is "on same page" with the team management as far as his international future is concerned, skipper Virat Kohli said on Saturday.

On the eve of the T20 International series against South Africa, Kohli maintained that the 38-year-old Dhoni will "remain valuable" as long as he continues playing the game even as team management grooms youngsters like Rishabh Pant.

"One great thing about him (Dhoni) is that, he thinks for Indian cricket. And whatever we (team management) think, he is on the same page. The alignment is there. The kind of mindset he has had about grooming youngsters and giving them opportunities, and he is still the same person," Kohli replied when asked if the legend is in his scheme of things for next year's World T20 in Australia.

Dhoni has taken a two-month sabbatical from cricket and is not a part of the T20 International series against South Africa starting on Sunday.

While Kohli reminded the scribes about Dhoni's ability to prove his detractors wrong, his answer on his impending international future was a bit open-ended.

"Look, experience is always going to matter whether you like it or not. I mean there are a numerous number of times people have given up on sportsmen and they have proved people wrong and he (Dhoni) has done that many times in his career as well. As long as he is available and continues to play, he is going to be very valuable," Kohli said.

"When you decide to stop playing is an absolutely individual thing, and no one else should have an opinion on it, that's what I think," he added.

Kohli also justified Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal's omission from the T20 squad

as their weakness with the willow has prompted them to try out some other options.

"That was one of the reasons also to give opportunities to the guys who have done well in the domestic format and the T20 format and in the IPL also. So I think it's about finding the best balance that we can as a side and not necessarily stick to one kind of combination. If all teams across the world are batting till No. 9, 10, why can't we," the captain explained.

The India skipper recalled how the team management was criticised when Chahal and Kuldeep were inducted in the white ball set-up replacing a more fancied Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

"So, you need to take those calls at one stage. Bringing those guys (Chahal and Kuldeep) at one stage was also not taken well by people. Look, whatever decisions are made, are to make sure that the team has the best and strongest balance that we can have approaching the T20 World Cup that we have next year," Kohli said.

With a lot of new faces trying to prove their mettle, the skipper outlined the specifics that he is looking in some of the players going forward in the season. "As far as the road map is concerned, whenever there is a world tournament coming up, it is like a milestone and you start preparing from backwards (back calculate matches). I think every team will go through same process before T20 WC.

"These are opportunities where we can try various combinations with new people around -- check their ability, character, composure to perform at international level. From that point of view, it is exciting for a captain to try different players and check out combinations. We have all come through that process and I feel happy when I see these new faces emerging, trying to express themselves.

Lakshya enters final of Belgian International



LEUVEN (BELGIUM), SEPT 14 (PTI): Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen stormed into the men's singles finals of the Belgian International Challenge with a straight game win over Denmark's Kim Bruun here.

The 18-year-old from Almora notched up a comfortable 21-18 21-11 win over Bruun in a 48-minute semifinal clash on Friday night.

Lakshya, the Asian junior champion, will face second seed Victor Svendsen of Denmark in the finals.

The semifinal clash was a close affair initially with Lakshya and Bruun exchanging leads fre-

quently before the Danish shuttler jumped to a 11-9 advantage at the break. However, Lakshya erased the deficit after the interval and build on a slender 13-12 lead to slowly move ahead and eventually pocketed the opening game comfortably.

Lakshya came out with all cylinders blazing in the second game to jump to a 6-2 lead early on and then reeled off five straight points to grab a 11-3 lead at the breather.

The Indian produced another burst of five straight points to create a huge gap which Bruun failed to bridge.

Baloch activists organise poster campaign in Geneva to highlight rights violations by Pak



GENEVA, SEP 14 (PTI): Baloch rights activists have organised a poster campaign in Geneva to highlight Pakistan's "egregious infractions" in Balochistan where "enforced disappearances and killings" have assumed "epidemic proportions".

Significantly, the 'Stop Baloch Genocide' poster campaign, organised by the Baloch Human Rights Council (BHRC) at the Broken Chair monument area here, coincides with the 42nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Broken Chair is a monumental sculpture made in wood by the Swiss artist Daniel Berset. Several protests and demonstrations in Geneva are organised in this area.

"Balochistan is the most deprived region within Pakistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - a project allegedly aimed at improving the lives of the people of Pakistan and China - has only exacerbated the deprivation and given Pakistan an excuse to abuse and profit from the abundant

resources available on Baloch lands," a BHRC release said.

What has been officially lauded as an effort to promote bilateral connectivity, investment, and trade initiatives has actually functioned as state-sanctioned "cultural extermination", it said.

The poster campaign that began on Friday comes at a time when Pakistan and India are engaged in a war of words on Kashmir after India abrogated Article 370 provisions. The Indian side has hit out at Pakistan for committing rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities.

The BHRC seeks to raise vital awareness about Pakistan's "egregious infractions" with the poster campaign and highlight the country's "ever-worsening exploitation" of the region.

The poster campaign asserts that "enforced disappearances and killings have assumed epidemic proportions".

"Villages have been slashed and burned by the Pakistani Army to make room for the settlement of Chinese col-

onies. Those Baloch whose homes have been destroyed are forced to resettle in abject conditions near the Pakistani Army camps, where they suffer under incessant, hostile surveillance," the BHRC said.

The posters also draw attention to the fact that more than a dozen mass graves have been discovered on the outskirts of "occupied Balochistan", where year after year Pakistani security forces have "murdered and then haphazardly dumped hundreds if not thousands of Baloch people", the Baloch rights body said. The poster campaign calls for global action against Pakistan's "terrorisation of Balochistan".

"A whopping 80 per cent of Pakistan's mineral requirements are fulfilled by Balochistan, and Pakistan's second largest energy source originates there. Yet, the Pakistani government has plundered the resources of Balochistan and restricted the most basic human rights of the people living there," the statement said. The posters in the campaign also highlights

that half of Balochistan has no access to clean drinking water, Baloch women and children are routinely abducted, harassed, and tortured by the Pakistani security forces, and out of every 100 children in Balochistan, 63 are not in school, the rights body said. "Almost 57 per cent of people live below the poverty line, are unable to even purchase food for their children. Because of this, five in ten children are malnourished in Balochistan," the BHRC said.

The activists behind the campaign believe the only way to secure justice and peace for the people of Balochistan is for the UN and other relevant international parties to immediately put heavy pressure on Pakistan and level appropriate sanctions against it.

"Without that pressure, the UN and the rest of the global community signal to the people of Balochistan that securing their freedom and fundamental human rights is simply not a priority," the Baloch rights body said.

Former PM Cameron 'sorry' for Brexit divisions

LONDON, SEP 14 (AP): The British prime minister who called the Brexit referendum and then saw the public vote to leave the European Union says he is sorry for the divisions it has caused.

David Cameron said in an interview published Saturday that he thinks about the consequences of the Brexit referendum "every single day" and worries "desperately" about what will happen next.

"I deeply regret the outcome and accept that my approach failed," he said. "The decisions I took contributed to that failure. I failed." He admitted that many people blame him for the Brexit divisions that have deepened since the referendum and will never forgive him, but he defended his decision to call the vote.

He spoke to The Times newspaper to promote his soon-to-be published memoir. Cameron, who had supported remaining in the EU, resigned the morning after the 2016 referendum. He has stayed out of electoral politics since then and largely kept out of the public eye.

His two successors first Theresa May and now Prime Minister Boris Johnson have wrestled with the Brexit issue and have thus far been unable to win par-



liamentary backing for an exit plan agreed with EU leaders.

Johnson faces an Oct. 31 deadline for leaving the EU and has been instructed by Parliament to seek an extension, which he says he will not do despite concerns that leaving without a deal would cause severe economic problems and possible food and medicine shortages. He will meet with European leaders Monday to search for some compromise.

The 52-year-old Cameron attacked former allies Johnson and

Michael Gove, who helped spearhead the "Leave" campaign.

Cameron says they "left the truth at home" during the campaign, citing among other things the claim that Britain could save 350 million pounds per week that was being sent to the EU and could use that money to improve the National Health Service.

He said the referendum turned into a Conservative Party "psychodrama" and that he had been "hugely depressed" about leaving his post as prime minister.

Italy allows rescue ship to disembark migrants in Lampedusa: charity

PARIS, SEP 14 (AFP): Italy has agreed to allow rescue ship Ocean Viking to disembark 82 migrants in the southern port of Lampedusa, the SOS Mediterranean charity which runs the vessel said Saturday.

"The Ocean Viking just received instructions from the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre of Rome to proceed to Lampedusa," SOS Mediterranean tweeted. "An ad hoc European agreement between Italy, France, Germany, Portugal and Luxembourg has been reached to allow the landing," said French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner, referring to the division of the migrants between the five countries.

"We now need to agree on a genuine temporary European mechanism," Castaner added. The Ocean Viking was on



its second mission and was shuttling between Malta and Italy for nearly two weeks, seeking a port to land the migrants. Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), which runs the ship jointly with SOS Mediterranean, said the group comprised 58 men, six women and 18 children. The Ocean Viking had rescued 356 migrants on its first mission.

Italy is trying to set up an automatic system for distributing migrants rescued in the Mediterranean between Europe-

an countries, diplomatic sources said recently. Such a deal would put an end to the case-by-case negotiations over who will take in those saved during the perilous crossing from North Africa, which has seen vulnerable asylum seekers trapped in limbo at sea for lengthy periods.

France and Germany have given their green light to the new system, which could also involve Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Spain, Italy's Repubblica and Stampa dailies said.

Pakistani cleric Tahirul Qadri quits politics, resigns from party

BY M ZULQERNAIN

LAHORE, SEP 14 (PTI):

Fiery Pakistani cleric Tahirul Qadri on Saturday announced his decision to quit politics and resigned as the chairman of his Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) party. Qadri, 68, who is based in Canada, made the announcement through a video message. He, however, did not mention any reason behind the decision.

"I am retiring from Pakistani politics, political activities and from my post as PAT chairman. I am not handing over PAT leadership to my sons but transferring power to the party's council," he said in the video message issued from Canada. Qadri also expressed disappointment for not getting justice for the 14 PAT workers killed in 2014.

"Our legal battle for the killing of our 14 workers will continue till my last breath. That is not a matter of politics it is a matter of faith," Qadri said. Fourteen people, including two women, were killed and 100 others suffered bullet injuries when police raided the house and offices of Pakistan Awami Tehreek's (PAT) chief Tahirul Qadri in Model Town. According to a source in the party, Qadri, whose party that held anti-government protests in Islamabad in 2014.

Mall brawls and street fights as Hong Kong polarisation deepens

HONG KONG, SEP 14 (AFP): Fights erupted in Hong Kong on Saturday with political rivals trading blows in a mall and Beijing supporters using Chinese flags to assault opponents on a street, deepening the city's polarisation after months of pro-democracy protests.

The once-stable international hub has been convulsed by weeks of huge, sometimes violent rallies calling for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability.

The movement is the biggest challenge to China's rule since the city was handed back by Britain in 1997 and shows no sign of ending, with city leaders and Beijing taking a hard line.

Fights have begun breaking out with increased frequency after pro-democracy supporters began holding impromptu singalongs of a popular protest anthem -- and as pro-Beijing supporters have held rival gatherings to sing China's national anthem.

In the district of Fortress Hill on Saturday, a group of men, many waving Chinese flags and wearing blue t-shirts declaring "I love HK police", attacked people perceived to be pro-democracy protesters.

Multiple videos posted online showed the group of men assaulting largely younger victims with large flags on poles -- and with punches and kicks -- as terrified on-

lookers ran away. Hong Kong police did not respond to a request for comment on the incident.

Fortress Hill is next to North Point, an area of the city where similar mob attacks by government supporters have occurred this summer and which has long been a bastion of pro-Beijing sentiment.

Shortly before the assaults, the men were filmed tearing down a post-it notes and posters on a nearby "Lennon Wall", pro-democracy billboards which have sprung up across the city.

Within hours, the wall was back up as crowds put up new slogans and messages.

"It makes me so angry," a 37-year-old local pro-democracy protester, who gave her first name as Ed, told AFP.

"These walls are a form of emotional support, it shows the movement is still alive. But even if they destroy it, we will just build it again."

Fights later broke out between pro-China and pro-democracy supporters in Amoy Plaza, a shopping centre on the other side of the harbour. An AFP photographer at the scene said some two hundred people had gathered to wave Chinese flags and sing the national anthem.

Violence erupted after pro-democracy sup-

porters arrived on the scene with several people on both sides visibly bloodied and bruised.

Police with shields and helmets later rushed into the mall, ending the fights.

Some young pro-democracy supporters were seen being detained outside and inside the mall by police.

The South China Morning Post said fights also broke out between ideological rivals in a subway station.

Democracy protesters have accused police of taking sides, clamping down harder on their camp than violent government supporters -- accusations the force has strongly denied.

An attack by pro-government men with sticks in the town of Yuen Long in July which left more than 40 people hospitalised sent anger soaring after police were accused of taking too long to get to the incident and failing to arrest the aggressors on site.

Hong Kong has been battered by nearly 100 days of protests, sparked by a now-abandoned plan to allow extraditions to the mainland.

But with few concessions won so far the movement has snowballed into wider calls for democracy and a halt to sliding freedoms under Beijing's rule.

Millions have taken

part in huge, largely peaceful demonstrations.

But smaller groups of hardline protesters have fought increasingly violent battles with riot police and vandalised subway stations in scenes that have sent shockwaves through the once-stable financial hub.

Under a deal signed with Britain ahead of the city's 1997 handover to China, Hong Kong is allowed to keep its unique freedoms for 50 years.

Democracy activists accuse Beijing of renegeing on those promises by ramping up political control over the semi-autonomous territory.

Activists and analysts say the movement will only end when some other key demands are met, such as an inquiry into the police, an amnesty for the nearly 1,400 people arrested and universal suffrage.

But there is little sign of Beijing agreeing to those demands.

Plans by demonstrators to hold a large rally on Sunday have been rejected by the police. Previous bans have simply been ignored by the masses and clashes with police have quickly followed.

Protesters have also called for rallies the next two weekends and a general strike starting in October.

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Jamie Foxx tried to talk Idris Elba out of doing 'Django Unchained'



LOS ANGELES, SEP 14 (PTI): Before Jamie Foxx, filmmaker Quentin Tarantino was set to make his 2012 feature "Django Unchained" with Idris Elba but the actor was just not ready to give up easily.

During the TIFF Talks session with Cameron Bailey and actor Michael B Jordan, Foxx revealed that he badly wanted to work with Tarantino and so when he got the chance to meet Elba, he tried to deter the actor from taking the lead part.

According to IndieWire, Foxx said he told Elba that his looks would be a distraction for the viewers.

"I was like, 'Your beautiful black a** riding up on a horse, there's going to be some problems for everyone,'" the actor revealed.

Tarantino later chose not to go ahead with Elba because he thought it would not make sense to cast a British actor for an American story.

In an interview in 2013, Tarantino had said, "Yeah, Idris is British and this is an American story. I think a problem with a lot of movies that deal with this issue is they cast British actors to play the Southerners and it goes a long way to distancing the movie."

"They put on their gargoyle masks and they do their accents and you are not telling an American story any more," he added.

"Django Unchained", which also featured Leonardo DiCaprio, Christoph Waltz and Samuel L Jackson, is Tarantino's most commercially successful movie till date. The film raked in USD 425 million in worldwide gross.

Foxx currently features in "Just Mercy" along with Jordan. The Daniel Destin Cretton-directed film is set to release in December this year.

James Gunn reveals full cast of 'The Suicide Squad'

LOS ANGELES, SEP 14 (PTI): Filmmaker James Gunn has unveiled the full cast of his DC project, "The Suicide Squad".

Gunn, best known for directing the "Guardians of the Galaxy" series for Marvel Studios, took to Twitter on Friday to share the names of 24 actors who will be starring in the much-anticipated film.

"Don't get too attached. #TheSuicideSquad" he wrote along with a list of the cast members.

Margot Robbie will return as Harley Quinn, Viola Davis as Squad mastermind Amanda Waller, Jai Courtney as Captain Boomerang, and Joel Kinnaman as Rick Flag.

They will be joined by an equally impressive list of newcomers -- Idris Elba, John Cena, Nathan Fillion, Peter Capaldi, David Dastmalchian, Taika Waititi and Pete Davidson.

The project will also mark Gunn's reunion with his "Guardian of the Galaxy" stars Michael Rooker and Sean Gunn, who is also his brother.

Daniela Melchior, Joaquin Cosio, Flula Borg, Mayling Ng, Storm Reid, Steve Agee, Alice Braga, Juan Diego Botto, Julio Ruiz, Tinashe Kajese and Jennifer Holland round out the cast.

Gunn and Warner Bros have not yet revealed the characters details of the new cast members.

"The Suicide Squad" is being branded as a relaunch and the studio had roped in Gunn earlier this year. He has also penned the script.

The 2016 movie, directed by David Ayer and featuring the likes of Will Smith, Robbie and Davis, was met with poor reviews upon its debut. But the film was still able to make a splash at the global box office, raking in over USD 746 million.

"The Suicide Squad" will be produced by Chuck Roven and Peter Safran, while Nik Korda will serve as executive producer. Shooting will start later this month and the film will release in August 2021.

Lisa Kudrow recounts early years struggles playing Phoebe on 'Friends'

LOS ANGELES, SEP 14 (PTI): Lisa Kudrow will forever go down in history of American television for her portrayal of Phoebe Buffay in sitcom "Friends", but the actor admits that sometimes playing the character was a sheer struggle.

During a recent episode of the YouTube series "Hiking With Kevin", Kudrow recalled the difficulties she faced in playing the fan-favourite character during the show's early seasons.

"I had played dumb girls, sure. But it wasn't really me. I feel like s**t, I tricked them. At the audition, I was the only one who could cope with the audition process and that's how I got it, I think. So I had to work hard at being Phoebe, you know," she told the host, Kevin Nealon.

But in this battle, she was comforted by co-star Matt LeBlanc, who portrayed Joey Tribbiani in the show.

"I was struggling so much and LeBlanc was like, 'What's going on with you?' And I said, 'I can't, I don't think I have it, I mean, I don't know what I'm doing'."

"And he went, 'You're her, relax, you got it. You've been doing this f***ing character for three years. You're working too hard. That's your problem. You don't need to work this hard. Relax.' He was right," Kudrow said.

The 56-year-old actor also revealed that she has never seen an episode of the show.

"Friends", which ran from 1994 to 2004, also featured Jennifer Aniston, Courtney Cox, David Schwimmer, and Matthew Perry.

James Corden shuts down Bill Maher over fat-shaming comments



LOS ANGELES, SEP 14 (PTI): TV host and actor James Corden has slammed Bill Maher over his recent comments about normalising fat-shaming.

Maher, who hosts HBO's "Real Time", recently made a statement on the show where he called for the return of "fat-shaming".

"Fat-shaming doesn't need to end. It needs to make a comeback. Some amount of shame is good," he had said while discussing about obesity issues among people.

Corden on Thursday devoted an entire segment of his show "The Late Late Show", where he revealed his struggle with obesity and fat-shaming. "If making fun of fat people made them lose weight, there'd be no fat kids in schools and I'd have a six-pack right now... Fat-shaming never went anywhere. Ask literally any fat person, we are reminded of it all the time," Corden said.

"There's a common and

insulting misconception that fat people are stupid and lazy and we're not. We get it, we know. We know that being overweight isn't good for us and I've struggled my entire life trying to manage my weight and I suck at it," he added.

Corden also revealed that he has been on and off diets his entire life, but his body is what it is.

"We're not all as lucky as Bill Maher, you know, we don't all have a sense of superiority that burns 35,000 calories a day," he added.

The actor pointed out that fat-shaming is not the way to handle a problem like obesity. He referenced to studies which show that fat-shaming can lead to depression, anxiety, and self-destructive behaviour.

"Fat-shaming is just bullying. And bullying only makes the problem worse. I don't think stuff like this is going to solve the obesity epidemic," Corden added.



BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL! The singer, Hilary Duff dons her red tinted shades while walking in sunny Los Angeles.

Important to keep the realness alive, says Sonakshi Sinha

MUMBAI, SEP 14 (PTI): Sonakshi Sinha believes it is essential for celebrities to present their real self as people look up to them.

Sonakshi says she does not believe in presenting a facade when she is out or interacting with people as being fake does not take anyone anywhere.

"It is very important to stay real especially when you are in a position to influence people. It is very important to keep the realness alive. Being fake doesn't take you anywhere in life."

"The real me is a direct connect between me and fans, I like to be real when I am interacting with people on social media and otherwise or even when I am posting something, I like to do it myself, I like to be the real me," Sonakshi told PTI.

The "Mission Mangal" actor is aware that social media has become a double-edged sword, where a celebrity can either be lauded or trolled for their comments.

She says she has always been cautious while posting anything on social media.

"I have always commented on something that I have strongly felt about. If I don't have any knowledge, then I don't talk about it. I believe half knowledge can be very dangerous and so I refrain from it."

"Also, even though you are completely right there will be people on social media who would disagree with it."

Sonakshi is currently gearing up to judge the first digital reality fashion show, "Myntra Fashion Superstar".

Talking about her own

fashion sense, Sonakshi says though she likes to experiment, she always places her comfort above everything else.

"I like to experiment with fashion. My personal style is very casual, comfortable, relatable. Even though the airport looks have become a rage but I will never get styled for it because it is essential for me to be comfortable while traveling."

"Young girls tend to follow celebrities and hence I like to present a relatable style. When I have to dress up that time I dress up, otherwise I like to keep real."

"Fashion Superstar" is an eight part reality series which will see 10 contenders competing with each other. They will be mentored and judged by Sonakshi and celebrity stylist Shaleena Nathani.

ARIES: Oh, to be in alignment, Aries! Everything is going to work out better than you can imagine. Trust. With Lady Luck smiling down at you, be rest assured that blocks that stood in your path will be cleared. Plus, opportunities you could never dream of will come knocking at your door. Know that this is the sum of your own efforts. Get into action mode, like you always do. You have the power to make this venture a huge success.

Tip: Ready, set, go!

TAURUS: If you've been working yourself to the bone, know that a crash and burn is inevitable. Take a good look at that to-do list. What are the tasks that need your immediate attention? What are the things that can be dealt with later? Two words: bare minimum. While you're at it, cancel any and all plans that require you to leave your most authentic self at home. Learn to balance work with play and play with work will help you be your most creative self, Taurus.

Tip: Find that elusive work-life balance.

GEMINI: You are on the road to recovery, Gemini. What a wonderful feeling to be unfettered by the things that previously brought you down! Remember, happiness is a fleeting emo-

tion. Inner peace on the hand? She's here to stay, provided you make space. PS: It's a good idea to spread them good vibes like the flu as you go about your day.

Tip: Better days are coming!

CANCER: Cancer, you have a knack for finding solutions that help people move closer to their goals and get organised. Consider this as superpower. This phase of your life requires you to step into bigger shoes. To accept greater responsibility and lead your team towards success. Remember, finding a balance between the head and the heart is the secret to being invincible.

Tip: Look for leadership roles to shine.

LEO: Multitasking isn't all that it's cracked up to be. The so-called powerplayers have you fooled. Your end-of-the-week task list requires you to channel your inner Zen Master and focus on one thing at a time. Consider the 1-3-5 method when getting organised: do the most important thing first (yes, the one you've been avoiding), three medium things next, and five little things last.

Tip: Prioritising is the key to efficiency.

VIRGO: On the cards today: telepathic communication and synchronistic encounters. The

Universe is talking to you in signs and symbols. Be cognizant of the messages that are coming through. Connecting with your inner witch/Magi promises to be just as important. Pull out them cards and crystals, Virgo. You're more intuitive than you give yourself credit for. Tip: Let your intuition help you find the right answers.

LIBRA: Two words: facts + figures. This is not the time to let your emotions come in the way. Libra, your strong sense of Justice will help you make the right decisions. Clarity is another keyword for you today. You are channelling the right ideas. Figure out how to put them into action! Take charge of your life and lead from the front. A new career path is opening up for some you. Don't be afraid to take the plunge.

Tip: Take charge and lead from the front.

SCORPIO: Ah, the good old days! Stop reminiscing and start acting. A reunion is on the cards today. Scorpio, get ready to make new memories for your soul circle. But it's not just about the emotional. You're being asked to seek help creatively/professionally, especially if you're feeling blocked in any way. A con-

versation with your loved ones could help you gain fresh perspective and take things to the next level.

Tip: Spending time with those who make you feel at home.

SAGITTARIUS: What is we said each thought is charged with a powerful intention? Would that inspire you to reroute your thoughts? Stop focusing on what hasn't worked out and turn the wheel of Fortune around. Journal prompt: If today is the first day of the rest of your life, what would the next six months look like? Sow your seeds with intention, Sagittarius. Major openings await you on the work front.

Tip: Be cognizant of the openings that are showing up.

CAPRICORN: Two is your magic number, Capricorn. The cards are urging you to sync your forces with that one person who makes you feel invincible. Oh, the territories you will conquer when you are on the same page! Overheard at the cosmic conference: your partnership is evolving to a whole new level. Some of you may find the mentor you've been hoping and praying for. Be open to their guidance. They will help you get in touch with your best

self and create opportunities you could only dream of.

Tip: Welcome this connection with open arms.

AQUARIUS: The more you try to push the so-called negative thoughts away, the more they will haunt you. Express, don't suppress. Let things come to the surface. Learn to watch what's coming up rather than engaging with it. This is the secret to freeing yourself from self-sabotaging patterns. Some of you may find yourself confronted by your sexual wounds. Do you want to give your past power over your present? Keep this in mind as and when love comes knocking at your door.

Tip: Free yourself from the past traumas.

PISCES: You've come a long way, Pisces. Now, get ready for your next big move. There's a whole world out there waiting to be conquered. Check in with your vision board before you step forward. The good news: the obstacles that stood in your way are now being cleared. Remember, there's a lot of your experiences have taught you. When people come seeking wise counsel, trust yourself to guide them on their path.

Tip: Plan for the future and take the first step.